Aid to India

6628. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item which appeared in the Hindustan Times dated 13th February, 1994 captioned stop aid to India, say 29 Senators'; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and what is the reaction of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA) (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Congressman Roscoe Bartlett and 28 other Congressmen wrote to President Clinton in February, 1994 urging that the US link "development aid to India to its admittance of Amnesty International into Punjab, "Khalistan" for the purpose of investigating human rights violations". The Congressmen alleged that without such investigation, human rights abuses against the Sikhs were likely to continue. Mentioning that the Indian Government claimed to have brought "please" to "Punjab, Khalistan", the Congressmen stated that the Indian Government refused to repeal draconian laws which deny even the most basic human rights" and using such laws, had "imprisoned tens of thousands of Sikhs".

US authorities as well as Congressmen have been apprised that the situation in Punjab has returned to normal, Government have also explained additional measures taken for the protection of human rights, including the setting up of the National Human Rights Commission. Government have conveyed that their foremost concern is to protect the human rights of innocent citizens of India.

P.M.s Visits to USA and Russia

6629. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA: SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the visits of the Hon. Prime Minsiter of USA and Russia have finally been fixed up;

(b) what are the expected fall out from above proposed visits to two countries, and

(c) what are the issues on which we have identical approach with USA and Russia and where we differ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R.L. BHATIA): (a) PM will visit the US in May, 1994. He is scheduled to meet President Clinton on 19, May, 1994. Dated for PM's visit to Russia have not been finalised.

(b) Such visits and discussions arising at summit-level provide impetus to bilateral cooperation between the countries concerned and exchange of views on issues of common concern. They are expected to result in substantial upgrading of bilateral relations and lead to enhanced cooperation in the bilateral and international sphere.

(c) It is normal for countries to have differences of perception on some issues and similarities of approach on others. This applies also to Indo-US and Indo-Russian relations. It is expected there will be a convergence of views on enhanced economic, technical and commercial cooperation, as well as in cooperation in forums like the UN and for its peacekeeping operations.